

DISTRICT V EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BOARD MEETING
Saturday, May 28, 2011

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Officers Present: Mary Paulone Carns, John Toy, Brian Ellis

Representatives
Present: Sharon Fairchild, Lou Joseph, John Tscholl, Jim Zimmerman,
Marc Sylvester, Jan Assini

Guests: Alex Bealles, District Tournament Coordinator
Barbara Bacon, GNT/NAOP Coordinator

WELCOME

President Mary Paulone Carns called the meeting to order at 10:40 AM and welcomed the members. She requested a moment of silence in memory of the sudden passing of Larry Long.

MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING

The minutes had previously been emailed to the members. The minutes were approved.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Treasurer's Report – Brian Ellis presented the Treasurer's Report. Highlights were:

Our current cash position is approximately \$95,000.00. District expenses have now been consolidated to provide more uniform accounting and reporting. This was compared to a balance of \$127,000.00 at the end of 2007.

A projected analysis of current tournament attendance with a proposed entry fee increase of \$1.00 per player would allow us to stop the current losses and achieve a break-even point.

An arrangement was achieved with the ACBL to cover certain losses at the Buffalo Regional/NAOP district finals as previously agreed due to the conflict with WBF.

The late filing fees from the IRS are still under dispute. Brian will advise when and if resolved.

A report was presented showing the last three years receipts/expenses for the Grand National Teams, as this was the end of the three year experimental period regarding the rotation of event location between Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Buffalo. The event seems to be continually losing between \$5,000.00 and \$7,000.00 annually, between the cost of the event, the entry fees and the subsidies provided to the winning teams.

Brian will review the wages paid to the caddies in the District to ensure compliance.

Report of the District Director

Sharon Fairchild reported that the new ACBL Headquarters facility is working very well. The ACBL President is touring 100 clubs in 100 days and plans to visit two clubs in District 5.

Sharon reported that the following terms were expiring on the Board of Governors: Brian Ellis, Christine Urbanek, and Bill Holt. It was noted and confirmed by Mary Paulone Carns that Bill Holt will not be running again for this position. Sharon and Mary urged those who plan to run or know of anyone planning to run to file their petitions in a timely manner, as outlined in the ACBL Bulletin.

Fifth Column – Mary Paulone Carns reported in the absence of Sharon Robertson that there were no issues. It was noted that the replacement for Mary Anne McNeirney was unable to fulfill her duties do to a family commitment and that the Pittsburgh Unit was planning to advertise the position. *(note: this problem has since been rectified and Mary Anne's original replacement, Carole Shanahan is once again handing the 5th column for Unit 142)*

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

All American Regional – (ongoing) – Sharon Fairchild reported it is going well – up roughly 30 tables over last year at this time. The only major complaint, as reiterated by Jim Zimmerman, involved the poor condition of the playing cards in use. As we have a District wide arrangement with Ken Van Cleve to provide these items, Mary and Sharon will discuss this with him to ensure this problem is resolved as soon as possible.

Pittsburgh Labor Day Regional – Mary Paulone Carns reported that the plans are underway for the “Roni” Labor Day Regional. The Hyatt staff continues to be easy to work with and accessible for all problems. Mary noted that flyers for the upcoming tournament were now available for distribution.

(note: it had been previously agreed to use the money in the “Roni” fund to cover the expenses of the free entries given to the winners of the “Play Free at the next ‘Roni’ Regional” contest. Last year’s winners were Mark Lair for the over 2000 and Elio Catafalmo for the under 2000.)

Buffalo Regional – John Toy noted that the tournament dates had to be changed due to the Jewish High Holidays and Canadian Thanksgiving Holiday. The new dates are October 11-16, 2011. The tournament will once again be held on Grand Island.

Rock and Roll Regional - Sharon Fairchild noted that the poor weather in January 2011 had a detrimental effect on the tournament attendance. Registration at the tournament provided an e-mail and postal address database which Sharon used to send surveys regarding the tournament and to advertise the upcoming tournaments. There were several suggestions received regarding additional events and the perceived shortness of the dinner break (based on 1:30 and 7:00 PM starting times) as well as confusion regarding the starting times.

The new contract was successfully negotiated for January 2012 which maintains the room rate and rental at current levels, includes a staff room rate, and a guarantee to avoid the problem of people finding a better rate on the internet than the advertised bridge rate.

Jan Assini reported for the upcoming January 2012 tournament. She commented that she has received many requests for a new Knockout event to start every day. There was much discussion regarding the size of the tournament compared to other tournaments with larger attendance. A relatively small tournament ends up with a decreased pool of players in each new knockout event. Suggestions were also made for a side Board-A-Match team game instead of a single session Swiss on one of the evenings. It was noted that this has not been a popular event among lower ranking players.

Summer STaC – Mary Paulone Carns reported on the STaC which will be held June 14-20. Registration is now done through the ACBL online. It has been slower than usual. This may be due to the ACBL's registration policy and ACBL's tardiness in sending this information. Mary will send an e-mail to the clubs that have not registered to try and speed up the process.

Website – Mary Paulone Carns reported on behalf of Bill Holt, the District 5 webmaster. There are currently no problems, short of a server glitch earlier in the tournament.

Membership – Marc Sylvester again presented a detailed report regarding member recruitment and retention. He will continue his efforts to improve District 5's standing vis-à-vis the other Districts in the ACBL. It appears to be an uphill battle, but he is continuing to fight.

Having sent 128 letters to new members over the last 9 months, he has recently received several inquiries regarding the use of the free play certificate, so it would appear that his efforts are beginning to pay off.

Education and Marketing Committee – Jan Assini reported that there were 84 youngsters from the inner-city Cleveland schools that attended the tournament on Thursday, May 26. Although there continues to be a problem recruiting volunteers, Jan hopes that many of the 84 players will be able to assist in furthering the program. She has also been discussing a similar program with Dick Early in Akron. Jan thanked Sharon for her great assistance and announced that she will be holding a similar event at the January tournament.

NAOP and GNT – Mary Paulone Carns reviewed the past three years regarding the attendance at the Grand National Teams (GNT) in regards to the adopted rotation schedule. Our hopes of seeing a marked increase in the lower flights, proposed to come from local attendance, did not materialize as hoped.

Barbara Bacon announced that the 2011 North American Open Pairs (NAOP) would return to Meadville on October 22-23 (flyers available). The 2011 GNT in Buffalo was a major disappointment --2 teams in the Super Flight, 10 in A, 11 in B, 7 in C. This was a marked decline over the previous year's attendance. Barbara noted that the Erie Club has offered their location for the GNT's with the only proviso that it would have to be held over two different weekends because there is not space to handle all four flights at one time.

It was determined that the advantages of Erie over Meadville were significant, involving decreased rent and ability to bring in our own hospitality. The major disadvantage seems to be the necessity of holding the event on two separate weekends and the associated Director costs.

President Carns opened the floor to discussion regarding whether the GNT location rotation should be continued. John Toy moved that we terminate the rotation of the GNT starting in 2012, seconded by John Tscholl. Passed 6-2.

John Toy moved that the Board empower Barbara Bacon to negotiate with the Erie Bridge Club to hold the GNT's at their location, provided the rent was no higher than \$200.00 and to verify with the ACBL that one director would be sufficient for each of the weekends required, seconded by John Tscholl. Passed 7-1.

Barbara prepared a set of formal contest conditions for the NAOP. Permission was granted to have this submitted to the ACBL.

Marc Sylvester noted that there is one problem that needs to be addressed, involving the GNT conditions of contest regarding carry-overs and required matching of the 1st and 4th place and 2nd and 3rd place teams on the second day. Barbara will review the conditions of contest and present them to the Board in September for review.

Tournament Fees -- President Carns reminded the Executive Board that the vote to raise tournament fees for all events sponsored by District 5 would be held Sunday Evening, May 29, 2011 at the semi-annual Full Board Meeting.

Possibility of NABC in Buffalo – Sharon Fairchild reported that a formal bid had been submitted to the ACBL by the Buffalo-Niagara Area Convention Bureau for the Summer 2017 NABC. A committee from the ACBL will review the site(s) on June 6th and 7th.

Timers – Sharon Fairchild reported that the laptop timer is a possibility based on a trial run, however there are certain drawbacks that need to be addressed. President Carns requested that Alex Bealles do research on another type of timer and report in September at the Executive Board meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolving Sectional Tournament Conflicts – Sharon Fairchild requested that a committee be formed to determine what constitutes a conflict within the district. President Carns appointed Sharon Fairchild, Alex Bealles and a member to be appointed from Buffalo to form the committee, with Sharon Fairchild as the chair, said committee to present a report in September at the Executive Board Meeting. *(Note: Dian Petrov has since been appointed to the committee)*

Potential Changes to the Howard Lebow Award – President Carns reviewed the setup of the Lebow Award under the auspices of the ACBL Education Foundation. There have been problems in the past contacting the award winners. There have been, for all intents and purposes, no new donations made over the last three years. Howard's sister has recently advised that she wishes to withdraw from administering the award. The award is fully funded to the extent that it provides the winner with \$500.00, provided that current interest rates are maintained. There was discussion as to how to maintain a fitting tribute to Howard Lebow's memory while providing a worthwhile usage of the award

money. John Toy suggested that the money be used to further the inner-city schools bridge program (see above). The entire board concurred with this suggestion. President Carns will investigate with the ACBL Education Foundation policies and stipulations regarding making these changes.

Cleveland-Akron Tournaments – Sharon Fairchild has requested that it would be easier if she were able to run the same tournament every year instead of rotating between the January and May tournaments. President Carns had preliminary conversations with Monica Early regarding Akron handling the odd numbered years for the January Regionals. Jan Assini proposed that she and Monica could share the responsibilities for the odd and even year January Regionals so that the same continuity would be achieved as for the May tournaments. History has shown that there is now a great deal of overlapping between the Cleveland and Akron Unit committees. There was some discussion about having Akron handle all the January tournaments and Cleveland handle all the May tournaments. The potential problem depends on whether the Akron Unit has the manpower to handle a yearly tournament. President Carns will advise the board in September as to where this issue stands.

Tournament Publicity – Jan Assini advised all board members that she would be willing to take flyers for any and all upcoming District 5 tournaments (sectionals and regionals) to the Gatlinburg Regional for distribution.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion for adjournment was proposed by Jim Zimmerman and seconded by Jan Assini. The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 PM.